

OUR FAVORITE RECIPES

THE HUNGRY TRAVELER



FROM THE ASCENT TEAM



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For more than twenty years, Ascent has been partnering with the best managers and vendors in the lodging industry. We love this industry and would like more opportunities to connect.

Our team is spread over most of the U.S. and one thing we have in common, besides the love of travel, is the love of food. We want to share a few recipes from our team to yours for a tasty way to say thank you for being a staple in our lives.

Please enjoy the unique flavors we have compiled for you in our Hungry Traveler recipe booklet. From our team to yours – add a spoonful of laughter, cup of love, and sprinkle with #ascentfulness (our belief that small acts of kindness can inspire big change)!

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GUCCIONE CHICKEN



BY PAUL GUCCIONE

This is the actual name of the dish that people request when they visit us again. It was created during a low carb eating time of my life. I don't think it's really a healthy dish, but it's easier than an 8-10 hour spaghetti journey.

INGREDIENTS

- Flattened chicken breasts (8 at least)
 - Salt and peppered/Italian seasoning
- Fresh spinach
- Olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 24 oz marinara sauce, as Italian as you can get
- Roasted red peppers (bottled)
- Artichoke hearts (bottled)
- 1 can hearts of palm
- 2 cups feta cheese
- 2 cups of mozzarella (maybe throw in some parmesan, too)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 370ish.
2. In a wok, or similar pan, add a bit of olive oil to brown the garlic and before it starts to turn brown throw in the spinach. Let it cook down until it's almost like collard greens in consistency.
3. While the spinach is going get a lasagna pan and start with a drizzle of olive oil. Then add a very thin layer of marinara.
4. Put down a layer of thin chicken.
5. You're making a lasagna at this point. I put the sauteed spinach and garlic down first, then the feta, then a layer of the red peppers and artichoke hearts. Slice the hearts of palm, of course, and use that as the last layer. Feel free here to let as many of these ingredients fall out to help with the overall flavor during the baking time.
6. Put the top layer of the seasoned flat chicken breasts on top, so you're making a casserole with chicken on top and bottom.
7. Bake for at least 30 minutes, or when you think the chicken is cooked enough that you would eat it. Add 5 more minutes in the oven and a 5-10 minute cool down time. You'll know the right spot when you read the next step.
8. Pull the pan out of the oven and cover the chicken with marinara and a layer of mozzarella cheese. Add parmesan here, as well, if you'd like.
9. Bake for about 10 more minutes, or until the cheese is browned as much as you like.
10. When it's cooled enough and hit the plates it should look like a lasagna, with chicken instead of noodles.

SLOW COOKER TURKEY CHILI



BY CHRISTINE MALTESE

Christmas is usually everyone's favorite holiday but my family really loves October/Fall/Spooky Month. Chili is always the first thing I make as the weather starts to cool off. This recipe has been through a few different iterations, but we settled on what has become a family favorite that takes us all the way through the winter holidays as well.

Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds ground turkey
- 1 pound turkey Italian sausage (casing peeled and cut into chunks)
- 4 cans fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 jar of salsa (mild or medium to taste)
- 1 white or red onion diced
- 5-6 cloves of garlic
- 2 cans of black beans (drained)
- 1-2 cups of frozen corn (optional)
- 1 large red, orange, or yellow bell pepper (optional)
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp chili or chipotle powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp Mrs. Dash Spicy Blend
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp paprika

All seasonings are to taste and can be adjusted.

DIRECTIONS

1. Add everything but the beans and corn to the slow cooker.
2. Mix with a large spoon to incorporate all the seasonings and break up the ground turkey. Set slow cooker to 8-10 hours.
3. When you have approximately 2 hours left, add drained black beans and frozen corn.

Great toppings include avocado, sour cream, shredded cheese, chopped fresh cilantro, cornbread, or corn chips.

SPICY SALMON BOWL



BY DEANNA CONSTANT



INGREDIENTS

Salmon:

- 1/3 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/8 cup chili garlic sauce
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 tbsp honey
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 (8 oz) salmon filets

Pickled Cucumber:

- 1/2 cup rice or rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 3 Persian cucumbers, thinly sliced

Spicy Mayo:

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp Sriracha
- 2 tsp toasted sesame oil

Bowls:

- Cooked brown rice
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- Cilantro leaves, torn
- Sesame seeds, toasted

DIRECTIONS

Make salmon: Preheat oven to 350° and line a large baking sheet with foil. In a medium bowl, whisk together soy sauce, olive oil, chili garlic sauce, lime juice, honey, and garlic. Add salmon and gently toss to combine. Place on prepared baking sheet and bake until salmon is fork-tender, 20-25 minutes.

Meanwhile, make pickled cucumbers: In a microwave-safe bowl or jar, add vinegar, sugar, and salt and microwave until sugar and salt are dissolved, about 2 minutes. Stir in sesame oil, then add cucumbers and shake to combine. Cover with a tight-fitting lid or plastic wrap until ready to use.

Make spicy mayo: In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, Sriracha, and sesame oil.

Assemble bowls: Divide brown rice among 4 bowls. Top with salmon, pickled cucumbers, avocado, carrot, red onion, cilantro, and sesame seeds. Drizzle with spicy mayo.

MIMI'S SHRIMP N JALAPENO CHEESE GRITS



BY MISSY ZAK

My family calls me "MiMi", and I have been treating them to "concoctions" for many years. This dish gets requested frequently, so I wanted to share a little slice of my spicy life along the Gulf Coast with you. You can alter the spice level as needed, but the creaminess of the gouda grits and freshness of the cilantro offset some of the Cajun spice. This meal is perfect for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Get ready to enjoy this delicious dish from the South in your mouth!

INGREDIENTS

Grits

- 2 cups coarse corn grits
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 3 diced jalapenos (remove seeds and don't touch your eyes afterwards)
- The holy trinity of 1 tbsp of garlic, half chopped Vidalia onion, and half chopped bell pepper (I prefer red or yellow for sweetness and color)
- 1 cup cream or half n half
- 3 oz softened cream cheese
- 5 oz shredded gouda cheese
- Half stick of butter
- Chopped fresh cilantro for the topper
- Spritz of lemon juice

Shrimp

- 24 large wild-caught shrimp peeled and deveined (best if from the Gulf of Mexico)
- 1 stick of butter (or cook 6 slices of bacon and use the reserve grease to sauté the shrimp then crumble fried bacon to top the final dish)
- 4-5 tsp Tony Chachere's creole seasoning (more if you can handle the spice depending on size of shrimp)
- 1/2 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp chopped green onions
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Bring chicken stock to a boil. Add jalapenos, garlic, onion, and bell pepper. Cook for 5 minutes. Add grits and cook another 20 minutes – stir immediately so the grits don't clump together. Pour cream into grits (may need a little more than recipe requires if grits are getting dry). Continue to stir. Melt butter into grits and then add cream cheese and gouda cheese. Cook 5 more minutes and let rest. Save a little gouda for the topping.

When grits are about 20 minutes in, start melting your butter over medium heat to sauté the shrimp (or use bacon reserve). First add the garlic and green onions to the butter for 3-4 minutes. Then add the shrimp and sprinkle the Tony Chachere's on them. It only takes 5-7 minutes to cook the shrimp to a pink color. Drizzle the lemon juice on the shrimp then plate them on top of the jalapeno gouda grits. Sprinkle the cilantro and BAM you have a tasty meal your entire family will enjoy!

KGB PASTA



BY DEBI RUSKOFSKY

K.G.B. stands for Kielbasa, Green beans, and Bacon. This has always been a favorite recipe of my children.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz package Hillshire Farms Beef Kielbasa or smoked sausage or favorite brand of Kielbasa
- 1 can Glory Southern Seasoned Green beans (drained)
- 10 strips cooked bacon diced into bite size pieces
- Mini penne pasta or other small noodle (farfalle, rotini)
- Parmesan cheese, salt, pepper and garlic to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut bacon into 1-inch bite-size pieces and cook firm, but not crispy. Drain fat.
2. Cut Kielbasa into 1/4 inch coins then cut the coins in half. Add to bacon and cook til lightly browned.
3. Add drained Glory Seasoned Green Beans to bacon and Kielbasa. Stir together.
4. Cook pasta to al dente (use 8-10 oz for family of 4) Drain.
5. Add pasta, stir thoroughly, and add desired seasoning to taste.
6. Top with parmesan.

Optional: Spice it up with Rotel Original or hot diced tomatoes and green chilis.

GREEN CHILE PORK POSOLE



BY JULIE LAREAU

Look no further if you're searching for a delicious and easy dinner. My favorite time of the year to make this is when hatch green chilis are the freshest in late summer and fall, but this dish will be good anytime of the year. Also, it is great the next morning with eggs!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans hominy, drained (15.5 oz each)
 - 16 oz salsa verde
 - 1 can chicken broth (14.5 oz)
 - 8 oz green chiles
 - 1 cup chopped onion
 - 1 tbsp ground cumin
 - 4 cloves garlic
 - 1 tsp oregano
 - 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
 - 12 oz pork tenderloin (pulled or cut into cubes)
- Optional ingredients for serving
- shredded cheese
 - tortilla chips
 - avocado/guacamole
 - warm tortillas

DIRECTIONS

Add pork and chicken broth to slow cooker. Cook on high for 1.5 hours or until tender. Shred pork. Combine remaining ingredients. Set on low for approx 2-3 hours or keep on high for 1 hour. Top with tortilla chips, shredded cheese, and avocado or guacamole. Serve with tortillas.

JAMAICAN STEW PORK



BY ARNELLE SAMPSON

Jamaican Stew Pork is a hearty dish, known to be filling, quick to make, and yummy to eat.

This is a family favorite I learned from my mother, who learned it from her mother, as well. The ingredients are simple, the cooking method is easy, and once complete this is very satisfying after a long day

INGREDIENTS

- 2 small packs of cubed pork
- 1 can of dark red kidney beans
- 1/2 large, sweet onion (or 1 small onion)
- 1/2 green pepper
- 3 sprigs of green onion (or 1 entire small bundle)
- 7 sprigs of thyme
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp Browning
- Avocado oil
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp ketchup
- Optional: 1 tbsp flour and 3 tbsp cool water (thicken the gravy)
- 2 tbsp Meat & Stew seasoning (brand: Ochorios preferred)
- 1 tbsp Oxtail seasoning (brand: Ochorios preferred)
- 2 tbsp Combo seasoning (brand: Ochorios preferred)
- 2 tbsp Complete seasoning (brand: Badia preferred)
- 1 tbsp Sazonador Total seasoning (brand: Goya preferred)
- 1 tsp Black pepper
- 1 tsp Red crushed pepper
- 1 tsp Garlic powder
- 1 tsp Onion powder

DIRECTIONS

Seasoning Instructions:

Put on gloves, add the pork and all dry seasonings to a large metal bowl. Add the browning and Worcestershire, grab a large metal spoon and mix the ingredients until they are fully incorporated into the pork. Set aside while you prepare the pan. (At this stage you can also allow this to marinate for 10-20 minutes if you'd like).

Stove top Instructions:

Add avocado oil to a large skillet (enough to cover the bottom of the pan), bring the pan to medium heat. Crush the garlic cloves and green onion with the flat side of a knife and add to the pan (this helps to bring out the flavor of each ingredient). Add the thyme sprigs and allow these flavors to infuse into the oil (this takes 2-3 minutes). Add the chopped onion and green pepper (chop how you'd like). Next, add the seasoned pork, ketchup and more Worcestershire, stir together, lower the heat to low-medium, and then cover the skillet. Allow to cook "low and slow" for 45 min – 1 hour. Test the pork to ensure it is tender and taste the gravy. Add salt as needed (season to taste). If the pork is not tender, allow it to continue for another 15 minutes covered. Once the pork is tender and the gravy is seasoned to taste, grab a small cup. Add 1tbsp of flour and 3 tbsp of cool water, mix in the cup using a fork (to ensure there are no clumps), and add to the skillet. Mix the dish to ensure it incorporates the thickening agent and turn off the heat.

Pressure Cooker Instructions:

Add the seasoned pork, Worcestershire, ketchup, onion, green pepper, green onion, and thyme to the pressure cooker. Add a quarter cup of water and stir until incorporated. Close the pressure cooker, set the timer for 15 minutes on high. Taste the gravy and add salt as needed. Once complete, add the dark red kidney beans, flour/water thickener, stir, close, and set the timer for 5 minutes. (Pressure cookers also come with time recommendations for each protein type).

NANA'S POTATO CASSEROLE



BY EMILY VANDALL

Potato casserole has been a staple of family gatherings for more than 40 years. Cousins frequently fought over who got to have the first scoop.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb potatoes
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 8 oz sour cream
- 1 stick butter
- 2 cups grated cheddar
- Ritz crackers for topping
- Optional: slivered green onion

DIRECTIONS

Peel and slice potatoes. Boil and set aside.

Melt butter. Mix with soup. Let mixture cool and mix in sour cream.

Add potatoes, cheese, and optional green onion slivers.

Top with crushed Ritz crackers and dot with butter.

Bake at 350° for 30-45 minutes.



GRANDMA ROBERTS ORANGE DIAMONDS



BY JULIA PAIGE

I associate this treat with Christmas, because that's when my family traditionally makes them.

But they really taste both like summer and Christmas at the same time. This recipe from my Grandma Elsie Roberts. She ground the raisins using a traditional meat grinder clamped to the counter or tabletop, which we did during my childhood also. But a food processor works just as well.



INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup butter
- 1.5 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp grated orange zest
- 3 tbsp orange juice
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp cloves
- 1 cup raisins, pureed
- 1 cup chopped nuts

DIRECTIONS

Grease and flour a 10x15 cookie sheet.
Cream butter, gradually adding sugar until light and fluffy.
Add eggs, orange zest, and juice. Beat well.
In separate bowl stir flour, soda, salt, and spices, mixing well.
Add to wet mixture and blend well. Fold in raisins and nuts.
Spread evenly in prepared pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes until
tip is firm and golden brown.
Cool and spread with frosting. Cut into diamonds.

ORANGE FROSTING INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp butter
- 4 tbsp orange zest (approx 6-8 oranges)
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup milk or half/half

ORANGE FROSTING DIRECTIONS

Cream butter until soft. Add orange zest and blend.
Add sugar alternately with milk/cream, beating until frosting is
smooth and creamy. If needed, add milk a few drops at a time.
Optional: add red/yellow food coloring to desired color.



SALTED PEANUT CHEWS



BY TOM ROBESKY

INGREDIENTS

- 18 oz roll of sugar cookie dough
- 3 cups mini marshmallows
- 2/3 cup corn syrup
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tsp butter
- 10 oz package peanut butter chips
- 2 cups Rice Krispies
- 2 cups salted peanuts

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°. Break up cookie dough into ungreased 9x13 baking dish. With floured fingers, press dough evenly in bottom of pan to form crust.
2. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes until light golden brown.
3. Remove partially baked crust from oven. Immediately sprinkle marshmallows evenly over crust.
4. Return to oven. Bake additional 1-2 minutes until marshmallows begin to puff. Cool while preparing topping.
5. In large saucepan, combine corn syrup, butter, vanilla, and peanut butter chips. Cook over medium heat just until melted and smooth, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in cereal and peanuts. Immediately spoon warm topping over marshmallows; spread to cover. Refrigerate about 45 minutes or until firm. Cut into bars.

MINI OREO CHEESECAKE



BY MIKHA COLLINS

For me, the best part of a holiday dinner is the dessert. Every year growing up, my mom would make a rich and creamy Oreo cookie cheesecake for our family that I would happily devour after I first cleaned my dinner plate. As I continued the cheesecake tradition, I tried a mini-size version and fell deeper in love with this bite-sized, delicious dessert.



INGREDIENTS

- 12 Oreo cookies, whole
- 6 Oreo cookies, chopped
- 16 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line a standard 12-cup muffin pan with paper cups.
2. Place one Oreo cookie into each paper cup.
3. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese, gradually adding sugar, vanilla, eggs, sour cream, mixing well after each addition.
4. Spoon batter into muffin pan, filling each to almost the top.
5. Divide batter evenly among cookie-lined cups, filling each almost to the top.
6. Place in the lower third of the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes until firm in the middle.
7. Remove from oven and transfer to cooling racks.

CHOCOLATE HAUPAI PIE



photo credit: Ted's Bakery

BY JONATHAN CHING

This recipe is a copycat from Ted's Bakery in North Shore in Oahu. My family has been a frequent patron our whole life.

INGREDIENTS

Oreo crust

- 24 Oreos
- 1/4 cup butter

Pie filling

- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 5 tbsp cornstarch
- 14 oz can unsweetened coconut milk (not fat free or light)
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Whipped Cream Topping

- 1.5 cups heaving whipping cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp coconut extract (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Crush Oreos and melt butter, mix until combined. Press into the bottom of a 9-inch pie pan.
2. In a small bowl, combined 1/2 cup whole milk with 5 tbsp cornstarch and mix until cornstarch is dissolved. Set aside. In a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat, whisk together coconut milk, 1 cup whole milk, and sugar. Bring to a simmer, whisking often.
3. Stir cornstarch mixture before adding to coconut milk mixture. Add cornstarch mixture slowly while whisking constantly. Continue whisking until mixture becomes thick, like a thick pudding (this is "haupia"). It is very important that the mixture is thick before moving to the next steps. Place about half of the haupia mixture in a separate bowl and set aside. Add chocolate chips to the remaining mixture in the sauce pan and stir until the chocolate chips are completely melted and well combined.
4. Add chocolate haupia mixture immediately to cooled pie crust and smooth with a spatula until even.
5. Carefully add the remaining non-chocolate haupia mixture over the top and gently smooth over with a knife until even.
6. Cover (we just use an upside-down plate) and refrigerate for 6 hours. Cut into slices when cooled.
7. Make whipped cream topping. Whip heavy cream with 1/4 cup sugar until stiff peaks form. Using a piping bag with a large star tip, pipe whipped cream onto completely cooled pie.



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